

**Direct Deposit Safe, Easy Way
to Receive Railroad Retirement Benefits**

Direct Deposit—the electronic transfer of funds directly to a customer's account—is one of the fastest-growing services being offered by financial institutions today. More than 50 million Americans are currently using some form of electronic transfer, according to the National Automated Clearing House Association.

Since the introduction of Direct Deposit in the mid-1970's, U.S. government agencies have encouraged benefit recipients to use it as a safe, convenient way to receive their railroad retirement, social security, veterans' and other payments. A recent law passed by Congress aims to have people who get their government payments by check (except tax refunds) enroll in this program by January 1999.

Since July 1996, all persons applying for monthly railroad retirement, survivor, or disability benefits or biweekly railroad unemployment or sickness benefits have been automatically enrolled in the Direct Deposit program unless they can qualify for a waiver.

Direct Deposit has proved to be a popular choice for millions of federal beneficiaries. About 70 percent of railroad retirement annuitants and about 85 percent of the claimants for railroad unemployment and sickness insurance benefits currently receive their benefits through Direct Deposit.

With Direct Deposit, payments are sent directly from Treasury to recipients' checking or savings accounts at banks, credit unions or savings and loans institutions, and the money is available on the morning of the scheduled payment date. Direct Deposit also eliminates the risk of paper checks being stolen, lost or misplaced.

Enrolling in Direct Deposit is easy. Annuitants may simply telephone, write or visit the nearest Railroad Retirement Board field office to initiate Direct Deposit or to make Direct Deposit-related changes. They may also enroll in the program through their financial institution.

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